THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) A meeting of the National Committee for celebration of 2600 years of Tirthankara Mahavira's Janma Kalyanak was held under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister on 9th December, 2000. Various decisions taken in the meeting were further discussed in the meeting of the Implementation Committee held under the chairmanship of Minister of Tourism and Culture on 27th March, 2001.

(b) and (c) So far 25 proposals have been received from State Governments/NGOs/private individuals for grant of financial assistance for undertaking various activities/programmes such as preservation of Jain Manuscripts, rejuvenation of ancient Jain temples, adoption of particular villages under the Mahavir Gram Kalyan Yojana, holding of national/international seminars, development of some places connected to Bhagwan Mahavir as tourist spots, publication of important Jain literature, establishment of Academics/medical colleges/hostel, to promote research in Jain philosophy, etc.

(d) to (f) At present there is no such proposal under consideration.

Heritage status by UNESCO to art forms of India

456. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any art forms of India has been conferred the heritage status by UNESCO;

(b) whether there is any Governmental or Quasi-Government agency in our country to send proposals to the UNESCO in this regard; and

(c) if not, will Government consider desirability of identifying such an agency?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Recently, Kutiyattam, a form of Sanskrit theatre from Kerala, has been proclaimed by UNESCO as a 'Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity'.

(b) and (c) As per UNESCO'S Regulations, submissions of candidatures for proclamation of 'Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity' are submitted to UNESCO with the agreement of the communities concerned, by:

(i) Government of Member States and of Associate members;

(ii) inter-governmental organization, in consultation with the National Commission for UNESCO of the country concerned; or

(iii) non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having formal relations with UNESCO, in consultation with the National Commission for UNESCO of their country.

Tourism festival at Visakhapatnam

457. DR.Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has urged the Union Government to consider for a bigger tourism festival at Visakhapatnam during the month of November, 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps are being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Government of India to organise a programme in a big way at Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad during November, 2001 on the line of International festival of Russia Folk Dances and Singapore Lion Dances through the Indian Council for the Cultural Relations (ICCR).

(c) The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) had organised performances by as may as five visiting foreign